

Linguistic variation and linguistic virtuosity of young “Ghetto”-migrants in Mannheim, Germany*

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In this paper, we provide an insight into the life world and social experiences of young Turkish migrants who are categorised by German society as “social problem cases”. Based on natural conversational data, we describe the communicative repertoire of one migrant adolescent and that of his friends. Our aims are (a) to isolate those linguistic features that convey the impression of “foreignness”, and stand out among other German speakers’ features, and (b) to analyse the variability in our informants’ discursive practices – i.e. code- or style-switching, as it is commonly referred to in the literature – in order to show how variation serves as a communicative resource. Our findings show that these adolescents’ remarkable linguistic proficiency and communicative competence contrast markedly to their low educational and professional status.

1. Aim of the study

The paper is based on earlier work on “German-Turkish variation and the construction of social styles of communication in young migrant groups of Turkish origin in Mannheim”, which used ethnographic, sociolinguistic, and conversation analytic methods of data collection and analysis, and was carried out at the Institute for German Language in Mannheim, Germany.¹ This project focused particularly on those young migrants who were successful at school and who reached socially satisfactory positions in German society. But so far, very little has been written about the social and linguistic development of young migrants who are regarded by German society and German educational institutions as “school

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1. For publications, see www.ids-mannheim.de/prag/soziostilistik/tuerkisch.html.

failures” or as “social problem cases”. Our aim is to make a contribution to this issue, and provide greater insight into the life world and communicative practices of Turkish migrant adolescents who have grown up in a typical migrant neighbourhood in Mannheim. The data on which our analysis is based are (a) an ethnographic interview with the seventeen-year-old Murat who, as his friends join in, switches to a peer conversation with the ethnographer and (b) an interview with a TV reporter with the same young man and his friends two years after the first interview. The aim of our analysis is

- to present the linguistic repertoire this adolescent displays when he is with his friends in the first conversational situation and to reconstruct the discursive, interactive, and social functions of characteristic variational patterns; and
- to describe the adolescents’ conversational performances in a more formal situation two years later.

After a short introduction to existing research on ethnolects (Section 2), we describe the young migrant’s life world and his educational development, as well as the phonetic and prosodic characteristics of his German (Section 3). Section 4 presents the characteristic variation patterns used by the migrant in conversation with the ethnographer as well as in conversation with his friends. In Section 5, we show that in the second type of data, some new linguistic phenomena can be observed.

2. Ethnolectal varieties of German

In the last few decades, (multi)ethnolectal varieties of standard languages have developed in migrant contexts in many European cities. In Germany, Füglein (1999) was the first to describe these for Bamberg and Munich. She called these “socially marked” ethnolectal varieties “Kanak Sprak”.² Dirim and Auer (2004: Chap. 6.9) observe that adolescents in Hamburg use ethnolectal varieties, young migrants as well as young Germans,³ and Wiese (2006) describes ethnolectal forms in Berlin. In the inner city of Mannheim, ethnolectal forms have developed as a kind of *lingua franca* between children and adolescents of different linguistic backgrounds. University students from Turkish backgrounds regard these forms as socially

2. Füglein (1999) adopts the term “Kanak Sprak”, which was introduced by Feridun Zaimoğlu (1995), a German writer of Turkish origin.

3. Auer’s term (2003) for ethnolectal forms of German used by migrants of Turkish origin is “Türkenslang”.

marked and call them *Ghettodeutsch* (“ghetto German”); German teachers call them *Stadtteilsprache*, (district variety),⁴ and the speakers themselves call them *unser Ghettoslang* (“our ghetto slang”).⁵

The (multi)ethnolectal varieties in Mannheim are simplified versions of the regionally spoken German Standard where some characteristics occur quite regularly, others rather infrequently. The following characteristics occur fairly regularly:⁶

- a. Deletion of preposition and article in locatives and directives as in: *isch muss toilette, isch geh schwimmbad* ‘(I must toilet, I go pool)’.
- b. New constructions with the verb ‘machen’: *isch mach disch krankenhaus*⁸ ‘(I make you hospital’ = ‘I’ll beat you up so badly that you have to go to the hospital)’.
- c. The use of formulas such as *isch schwör* ‘(I swear)’ for confirmation and *isch hass des* ‘(I hate it)’ for a negative evaluation.
- d. The use of Turkish lexemes as address forms (*lan, moruk*, ‘man’, ‘old man’), in abuse (*siktir lan*, ‘fuck you, man’),⁹ and as interjections or discourse markers.
- e. A specific way of processing information that presupposes a large amount of shared knowledge and makes explicit only a small part of the background knowledge that is necessary for the addressee’s understanding (see Kallmeyer & Keim 2003; Keim 2008: 451ff.).
- f. A complex of prosodic and phonetic characteristics (Auer 2003; Kern & Selting 2006; Kern this volume; and Section 3.2 below).

The following characteristics occur less frequently:¹⁰

4. See Keim (2008), Part III, 2.1.

5. At the Hauptschule of the district, a German student answers the interviewer’s question about his speaking German in a strange way as follows: *das ist eben unser Ghettoslang* (“that is our ghetto slang”), see Oberle (2006).

6. For similar characteristics, see Auer (2003) and Wiese (2006).

7. The correct German forms are: *ich muss auf die Toilette, ich geh ins Schwimmbad*.

8. A correct German form would be: *ich schlag dich krankenhausreif*. Wiese (2006) describes in detail the ethnolectal utterance *ich mach dich messer*.

9. *Siktir* is a shortened version of *siktir git* ‘(let yourself be fucked and beat it)’.

10. These features are also described by Auer (2003), Dirim and Auer (2004), and Wiese (2006).

- g. Deletion of the article in noun phrases and in prepositional phrases: *gib mir kippe*; *isch war schlechteste*; *bevor=sch von klassenzimmer rausgeh*¹¹ ('give me cigarette; I was worst; before I leave classroom').
- h. Deletion of the pronoun, for example: *wann has=du fotografiert* instead of *wann has=du sie fotografiert* ('when did you take a photo of her').
- i. Changed gender: *rischtiges tee* (neuter instead of masc.), *meine fuß* (fem. instead of masc.).
- j. Other grammatical cases: *wenn=sch mit ihm heirate* instead of *wenn ich ihn heirate* ('when I marry him'); *er geht mir fremd* instead of *er geht fremd* ('he is unfaithful').
- k. Changed word order: *hauptsache lieb isch ihm* instead of *hauptsache ich liebe ihn* ('the main point is, I love him').

(Mult)ethnolectal varieties have developed and stabilised in multilingual groups, e.g., in school classes, youth centres, and sports or music groups where Turkish adolescents play an important role.

3. Life world and linguistic development of the "Ghetto" adolescents – as exemplified by Murat

Our ethnographic research was carried out between 2000 and 2004 in an inner city district of Mannheim, an industrial town of 320,000 inhabitants in south-western Germany. Over 21% of Mannheim's population are migrants,¹² most of them of Turkish origin. The district under investigation, traditionally a working class district, has a migrant population of over 65%; inhabitants of the district as well as outsiders call it a "migrant ghetto". The children's first contact with German, usually, is in kindergarten with their teachers. But since in some educational institutions of the district up to 100% of the children have a migrant background, the chances of obtaining sufficient Standard German input are low. As a consequence, the children develop a morphologically and lexically reduced German variety mixed with elements from other languages. When they start school, they usually do not have a high degree of competence in Standard German. This situation has serious consequences for the children's educational careers.

11. In correct German: *gib mir eine Kippe*; *ich war die Schlechteste*; *bevor ich aus dem Klassenzimmer rausgeh*.

12. In October 2004, 67,000 migrants from 177 nations were living in Mannheim, most of them in inner city districts; see *Mannheimer Morgen*, 26.10.2004, Nr. 249, p. 20.

One of the findings of our ethnographic research is that migrant children develop different socio-cultural orientations and communication practices depending on their school careers.¹³ Children who have the opportunity to go to the Gymnasium or the Realschule (10–20% of an age group) – both types of schools are situated outside the district – enter at the age of ten German educational worlds where migrants form quite a small minority. But most children go to the Hauptschule. This has implications for a ten-year-old child, since the Hauptschule is situated in the “ghetto” territory, and so s/he will be growing up in an environment and in peer groups where German-Turkish mixing or highly marked ethnolectal German varieties are the normal codes of interaction. When the adolescents leave the Hauptschule at the age of 15 with low marks or without any qualifications, as 25–30% of the students do, they have almost no chance of obtaining a professional qualification.¹⁴ These youths typically develop an anti-educational attitude, see themselves as “losers”, and align with other “ghetto” peer groups, where members are proud to be school failures.

3.1 Murat, a typical “Ghetto”-youth

At the time of the data collection, Murat was 17 years old, unemployed, and looking for a job. Murat was born in the migrant district and went to primary school there as well as to the Hauptschule. At the Hauptschule, he found most school subjects boring, and life after school was much more interesting. The boys roamed the streets, played computer games at the internet cafe, hung about in the playgrounds, or watched videos at Murat’s house. They started to skip lessons and get poor marks, and left school with very poor grades. The central interest in Murat’s life is his clique with its (partly illegal) activities. The boys see themselves as “Turks” and they are determined to marry only a Turkish girl (from the district or from their parents’ home regions). Since they cannot imagine returning to their parents’ home country, they decide to live in Mannheim.

Murat is eloquent, speaks German fluently, and has a wide linguistic repertoire including Standard German, Turkish and German-Turkish mixings, as well as ethnolectal forms.

13. For a detailed description, see Keim (2008: Part I).

14. Only 16% of the graduates from a Hauptschule in Mannheim receive professional training; see *Mannheimer Morgen*, Nr. 281, 03.12.2004, p. 20.

3.2 Phonetic features of Murat's German

The following description of phonetic features is based on data derived from the interviews with Murat. We focus on features that remain salient in the variety orientated to German Standard forms, which is the variety predominantly used in the interviews. The standard of reference for the description and classification of salience (in the non-technical sense of “foreignness”) is the spoken Standard German of the Mannheim area.

Murat pronounces <ch> after front vowels consistently as a palato-alveolar [ʃ].¹⁵ Although this feature is salient with reference to Standard German (with the palatal fricative [ç] in this position), it is not salient in relation to the regionally spoken Standard of Mannheim. But in contrast to typical Mannheim forms, Murat's articulation of the prepalatal fricative is stronger (more forte), longer in duration, with a higher degree of lip-rounding, and more palatal than dialectal [ç]. A further difference to regional forms is apparent in the realisation of short front vowels preceding the prepalatal fricative, especially the vowel in the pronoun <ich> ('I') and the intensifier <echt> ('really'), which Murat uses frequently. He articulates /e/ and /i/ before <ch> not as tense vowels, which would conform to the regional Standard, but as lax, centralised vowels. This is striking because Murat tends to articulate short vowels in other positions in conformity with the regional norm as tense vowels. This indicates that the 'ideal' Standard German vowel system with the correlation between openness and duration of vowels is dissolved (see also Auer 2003). With this, the distinction between short and long vowels is levelled out, which is still perceptible in the Mannheim vowel system.

Frequently, Murat deletes /t/ in final position. He does so not just in the frequently occurring function words <ist> (third person of 'to be') or <nicht> ('not'), where t-deletion is part of conventionally spoken Standard German, but he t-deletes almost consistently and independently of the lexical and morphological element involved. In cases where Murat pronounces final /t/, the articulation is without strong release and aspiration of the plosive. The affricate [ts] is reduced to /s/, e.g. in <zu> ('to'), and in general, the articulation of obstruents is more voiced. In relation to the Mannheim reference forms, voiced /s/ (even in final position) and plosives are salient. In particular /d/ and /b/ positioned between vowels are articulated with a very long phase of obstruction followed by a soft release involving a high degree of vibration of the vocal cords. The tendency not to strengthen consonants (e.g. [z] and non-aspirated /t/) in syllable-final positions does not correspond to the process of German *Auslautverhärtung*. Voiced and

15. The so-called 'coronalisation' is also documented as the only consistently occurring feature in the data of the "Turkish Power Boys" (Tertilt 1996, analysed in Auer 2003).

lenis obstruents positioned before morpheme boundaries have bearings on the constitution of junctures between words. Murat tends not to segment word-units with clear boundaries; in addition to the tendency not to devoice final consonants, vowels at the beginning of morphemic units tend to set in weakly, without glottal stop (see also Auer 2003).

The place of articulation of /a/ is often lower and more central than a Standard German /a/. Even in accented positions, the /a/ tends to have the quality of a deep-central schwa [ɐ]. This means that the a-sound both in (potentially) stressed positions and in unstressed positions is levelled out not only in terms of quantity (duration) but also in quality (timbre).

Murat's pronunciation of /r/ essentially conforms to the regional and general conventions of spoken Standard German. Like locals without a migrant background, he pronounces the /r/ that does not occur in syllable-final position almost consistently as a uvular fricative.¹⁶ At the end of syllables, /r/ is vocalised.¹⁷ To be more precise, Murat does not vocalise but simply deletes the /r/ consistently in positions following /a/, e.g. in: <arbeit> [a(:)bart]), which conforms to common Standard German conventions. He also deletes /r/ after /ɛ/ and rounded vowels, e.g. <lehrling> [lɛ:liŋ] or <wurden> [vu(:)dn], which is salient with reference to Standard German articulation but not with reference to regional Standard forms. Real vocalisation, the production of <r> as a vowel, takes place in positions following the front vowels /i/ and /e/, when the syllable carries the word-accent, so that <-ir>/<-er> are articulated as diphthongs [iɐ]/[ɛɐ]. Neither deletion nor vocalisation of /r/ is salient in the Mannheim system. But what is striking, and different from the regional forms is the prominence – above all based on duration – of the vowel generated, especially in the position of unstressed <-ir>, <-er>, e.g. in [nomalevaɪzə].

The prominence of syllables, which are not – according to Standard German conventions – stressed, or, more generally, the fact that there are no structural provisions for the reduction of linguistic forms, is a basic feature of Murat's German. On the one hand, non-reduced syllables in unstressed positions result in 'strange' accent structures at the level of word-stress, e.g. by Murat's unreduced articulation of the vowel in the prefix <(v)er->. On the other hand, the accent structure at the level of the intonational phrase and especially rhythm are moulded by unreduced forms, in particular by the fact that Murat scarcely uses articulatory

16. In the data analysed, there are two exceptional cases; in both cases, the /r/ is pronounced as an apical flap in the syllable-initial consonant cluster <dr>.

17. The only exceptional apical production of syllable-final /r/ is used when Murat is articulating a Turkish first name of a friend of his (*Erkan*).

reduction forms of function words (weak forms in the sense of Kohler 1995; see also Kern this volume).

This feature of missing reduction forms is the basis of a very salient ‘ethnolectal’ phenomenon. It is the fast beat of the ethnolect in the sense of the orientation to a syllable-timed rhythm. This means that typically it is not the time intervals between accentuated syllables that tend to be isochronous, but the intervals between the onset of single syllables.¹⁸ The iso-syllabic rhythm has implications for focus projection. Especially at the phrase level, Murat shows ‘unmotivated’ or random markings of focus domains in the sense of accents that do not correlate with the information structure of the utterance, e.g., accents marking functional elements such as prepositions or pronouns instead of content elements. At the phrase level, a recurrent intonation contour is salient. The tonal progress of Murat’s most typical contour rises to an early peak on the second or third syllable of the intonation phrase and the fundamental frequency is kept on a relatively high level with a low pitch range.¹⁹ Murat applies the contour like a default form, which in many cases seems not to blend with the information structure of his propositions – that is, without giving intonational cues that help to contextualise the utterance. The interpretation of the information structure is even more difficult because there is hardly any support from the pause structure. Within the high level contours, Murat tends to articulate relatively long units without clear boundaries and pauses.

Most segmental and prosodic features are interrelated and accomplish a holistic ‘Gestalt’, which is seen as conspicuous in relation to the German system of reference. From the perspective of Gestalt theory, one could say that ‘the whole’ of Murat’s ‘foreign accent’ is probably more than the sum of single features.

4. Linguistic variation and communicative practices of the seventeen-year-old Murat

The interview with Murat took place at the district’s central playground and lasted for almost two hours.²⁰ Murat describes his family’s situation, his educational career as a poor student, crucial experiences at school, his life with his friends, and

18. See Auer and Uhmann (1988) for a discussion of the “hypothesis of isochrony” (Abercrombie 1967: 96f.).

19. See Keim and Knöbl (2007) for a description and examples of this recurrent intonation contour. It is comparable to hat-contours (see von Essen 1964 or Peters 2005).

20. Murat knew the interviewer and agreed immediately to the interview.

his ideas about his future life. In the course of the interview, three of Murat's friends join in. In this conversational phase, Murat talks about a fight that he had with another adolescent.

In the course of the whole conversation, Murat displays a wide range of variation. Specific variation patterns that serve specific interactive and social functions can be differentiated. In order to demonstrate Murat's variational skills, we have selected maximally contrasting conversational phases:

- the beginning of the interview with the ethnographer where Murat presents his professional situation; this is the most formal part of the interview (Section 4.1);
- the welcoming of his friends with characteristic forms of peer-group communication (Section 4.2); and
- the narration of a fight addressed to the ethnographer as well as to his friends (Section 4.3).

4.1 Beginning of the interview: Murat's professional situation

Murat starts with the statement that he has no employment. Despite his poor Hauptschule qualification, he got an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic, but he did not like the company. In this part of the narration, Murat uses near-standard German, and his speech displays characteristic features of spoken German:²¹ (a) the post-positioning of structural parts, and (b) strings of main clauses with verb-first position.

a. Post-positioning of complex structural parts:

- *also=sch bin jetzt siebzehn * hab mit fünfzehn die hauptschule beendet- * (...) mit=nem schlechtn durschnitt- (...) drei komma vier-* ('well now I am seventeen * finished the Hauptschule at fifteen * with a poor average grade * three point four')
- *→ hab abba trotzdem ne ausbildungsstelle gefundn als kfz mechaniker in Ludwigshafen- * bei einem türkn- ←* ('but nevertheless got an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic in Ludwigshafen * at a Turk's')

The post-positioned elements are treated as independent prosodic units separated by a pause, or as units that are integrated at the prosodic and syntactic level into the previous structure. According to Kern and Selting (2006), these accentuation structures in post-positionings are typical forms of spoken German where the

21. For a detailed overview of characteristics of spoken German, see Schwitalla (2006).

preceding structures always carry the main (sentence) accent. The single construction units and the preceding structures, as well as the post-positionings, all end with level intonation.²² This, too, is a common means in oral narrations and complex descriptions of producing a coherent global structure.

b. Strings of main clauses with verb-first position:

- also=*sch bin jetzt siebzehn* ← ** *hab mit fünfzehn die hauptschule beendet* * (...) → *hab abba trotzdem ne ausbildungsstelle gefundn* ('well, now I am seventeen ** finished the Hauptschule at fifteen * [...] but nevertheless got an apprenticeship')

These features, too, are characteristic of oral German narrations. Stringing together main clauses with verb-first position is described by Günthner (2006: 99ff.) as “uneigentliche Verbspitzenstellung” and as “dichte Konstruktionen”. They are, especially, used in those parts of oral narratives that call for highly detailed and intensive descriptions. Murat’s use of these features is motivated by his task, which is to present in detail his development from school age up to his current situation. The semantic agent is established from the start (= *sch* or *isch*, ‘I’) and projected into the succeeding narrative sequences. The use of parallel syntactic structures and level pitch function as central elements for the production of narrative coherence and give Murat’s presentation a dense and intensive quality. In his last utterance, there is also post-positioning: <*es hat mir da net so gefallen die firma*> (‘I did not like it very much there, the company’).

When the ethnographer asks why he did not like the company, Murat gives two reasons. Thereby, he even comes very close to written German:

- the first reason is that he felt exploited: *weil isch bissl zu zu <vie“l a“rbeitn> musste un=die überstundn wurdn nisch bezahlt* (‘because I had to work too too hard and the overtime was not paid’);
- the second reason is that the actual conditions of his apprenticeship did not correspond to the legal regulations. At first, he refers to these regulations: → *norma“lerweise darf ja ein lehrling * nischt mehr wie siebeneinhalb stundn am tag arbeitn* ↓ ← (‘normally, a trainee is not allowed to work more than seven and a half hours a day’); and then, when comparing his actual working conditions with them, he emphasises their illegal quality: *un isch hab über ze“hn stundn am tag gearbeitet* ↓ * *un manschmal sogar über zwö“lf stundn* ↓ (‘and I had to work more than ten hours a day and sometimes even more than twelve hours’).

22. See Peters (2005: 122f.) for a description of level-pitch-contours.

As an inevitable consequence, Murat terminated his contract (syntactically connected by the particle *da* = ‘then’, louder voice and strong accentuation): <*da hab isch ge/gekü“ndischd*-> (‘then I handed in my notice’).

This segment consists of complex syntactic structures without the characteristic structures of spoken German described above, such as post-positionings and main clauses with verb-first position. Of course, there are also features of spoken German, such as word search (*zu zu vie“l*, ‘too too much’), elisions and clitical units (*un=die*), as well as the southern German form *bissl* (‘a bit’). But all together, this way of speaking is clearly oriented towards a literal presentation.²³

But on the phonetic and prosodic level, all the features described above (3.2) that signal “foreignness” occur:

- tense articulations of short vowels in [be(|)endet] (‘finished’), [nomaləvaɪzə] (‘usually’);
- lax realisation of ‘long’ vowels: [lɛ(:)lɪŋ] (‘trainee’);
- reduced front vowels preceding alveo-palatal articulations of <ch>: [əʃ:] (‘I’, transcribed as *isch*);
- levelling out of vowel quantity: [ʃule] (‘school’);²⁴
- prominence of syllables in unstressed positions – on the one hand, caused by vocalisation, as in [ɐbɐ] (‘but’), and on the other hand, in cases without vocalisation such as [be(|)endet] (‘finished’); in all these cases, the vowels in stressed and unstressed position are qualitatively and quantitatively levelled out;
- t-deletion: [mo:na], [gəkʏndɪʃ] (‘month’, ‘terminated my contract’);
- iso-syllabic orientated rhythm, salient accent structure and focus marking.

23. For example, in the utterance *norma“lerweise darf ja ein lehrling * nischt mehr wie siebeneinhalb stundn am tag arbeitn*↓ the final plosive in <nicht> (‘not’) is not deleted – which can be considered as orientation to written Standard forms in contrast to conventions of the spoken Standard, where the /t/ in <nicht> is regularly deleted.

24. In the example <schule>, the vowel /u/ – which is supposed to be long and carrying the word-accent – continues for 0.042 seconds; it is shorter than the second vowel at the end of <schule>, which is supposed to be in an unstressed position but continues for 0.053 seconds.

4.2 Two greeting rituals: Regular forms vs. peer group forms

When Murat's friends arrive, two greeting rituals are performed: (a) the ritual between Murat's friend Serat and the ethnographer (01/05); and (b) the ritual between Murat and Serat (06/09):²⁵

01 SE:	hallo	gut-
	hello	fine
02 IN:	hallo: ** na wie geht=s dir,	
	hello well, how are you	
<hr/>		
03 IN:	oder ihnen –ich muss ja junger mann	
	I should say 'Sie' and call you a young	
<hr/>		
04 IN:	sagn- LACHT	gut,
	man LAUGHS	fine
05 SE:	mhm	ja-
		yes
06 MU:	alles klar	nerden gelyon
	everything ok	where do you come from
<hr/>		
07 SE:	Heddesheim	Edeka * işim
	Heddesheim	my Edeka job
08 MU:	n=aptın-	
	what did you do	
<hr/>		
09 MU:	ja- un was geht dreiun zwa nzigs ta	
	and what's up	twenty-third

a. Ritual between Serat and the ethnographer (01/05)

Serat opens the ritual with the formula *hallo* ('hello'), and the ethnographer (IN) answers with the second part *hallo: ** na wie geht=s dir* ('hello'), thereby manifesting that she sees herself as the addressee of the informal greeting ritual. Then, she continues with a further greeting formula *na wie geht=s dir* ('well, how are you', 02), characteristic of rituals between good acquaintances. This is answered by Serat with a

25. For transcription conventions, see Appendix. Note that transcription lines are organised like in a musical score. Scores are separated by a continuous line. So, lines 01 and 02, and lines 04, 05 and 06 form a score. In a score, successive contributions are represented from left to right. So, in line 01, after SE has finished his utterance *hallo*, IN responds with *hallo: ** na wie geht=s dir*. Instances of simultaneous talking are presented one below the other in the score and marked by |, as for instance in lines 04 and 06. The Turkish elements are in bold letters.

corresponding part: *gut-* ('fine'). Then the ethnographer repairs the addressing pronoun *du* to the more official *Sie* and addresses Serat as a 'young man' (03). With this playfully modalised self-repair, she defines the relation to Serat as more formal. The greeting ritual ends with the ethnographer's reformulation *gut*↑ ('fine', 04) and Serat's further confirmation *ja-* ('yes', 05).

b. *Ritual between Murat and Serat (06/09)*

The welcoming between the adolescents is quite different. It is initiated by Murat with the greeting formula *alles klar*↑ ('everything ok', 06) characteristic of welcoming among (male) friends. Serat gives a short, positive reply (*mhm*, 05), spoken in a low voice. Then, with a switch into Turkish, Murat asks for information about his friend's latest activities: *nerden gelyon-* ('where do you come from', 06), which is answered by Serat's naming a village near Mannheim: *Heddesheim* (07). To Murat's second request: *n=aptın-* ('what did you do', 08), Serat answers in Turkish, too: *Edeka * işim* ('my Edeka job', 07). Then, Murat changes the topic and asks about a future event, thereby switching into ethnolect: *ja- un was geht dreiunszwanzigsta*↑ (lit.: 'what goes twenty third', meaning 'what's happening on the twenty-third', 09). The characteristic ethnolectal feature of this construction is the use of the temporal adverb without preposition and article (*dreiunszwanzigsta* instead of *am dreiunszwanzigsten*).²⁶ The formula has the format 'was geht + X', where X can be either an address form (such as *lan* or *Mann* in 'was geht Mann'), a local adverb (such as *jungbusch* in 'was geht Jungbusch') or a temporal adverb as in *was geht dreiunszwanzigsta*.

The welcoming ritual between the adolescents consists of minimal utterances with just as much information as is necessary for continuing the exchange. The interlocutors switch from colloquial German into Turkish and then into ethnolect. The exchange is produced in a plain, reduced, and monotonous way of speaking. In contrast to the greeting ritual between Serat and the ethnographer, where especially the ethnographer's phrases have an expressive quality, the two adolescents perform a welcoming interaction that is characterised by short utterances with minimum content, code-switching, and a reduced way of speaking. They perform a peer-group interaction thereby presenting themselves as "cool Turkish ghetto-boys".²⁷

26. Furthermore, in *dreiunszwanzigsta*↑ ('twenty-third') the ethnolectal feature of prominent vowels instead of /r/ in word final <-er> is very salient.

27. For the migrant male youth's self-characterisation as *cool*, see Keim (2008: Part I, Chap. 4).

4.3 Narrative of a fight: Double addressing and linguistic variation

As one of the friends pulls brass knuckles from his pocket, 'fighting' becomes the new topic. When the ethnographer asks if Murat is often involved in fighting, he at first vehemently rejects such an idea, but when Serat contradicts him, he admits that he had a fight quite recently. This confession induces the ethnographer to ask for further details: the reason for the fight was Murat's former girlfriend who left him for another young man. This young man provoked the fight. When the ethnographer asks for the outcome of the fight, Murat – prompted by his friend Serat – has to confess that he ran away. As an explanation for this exceptional behaviour, Murat starts the fight narrative. It consists of various segments differing on the prosodic as well as on the syntactic and phraseological level. We have chosen the first segments of the narrative for a detailed analysis of the interactive and discursive functions of the linguistic variation, as well as for a description of Murat's wide linguistic repertoire.

a. *Background information explaining his running away (528–532)*

Shortly before the fight took place, Murat had broken his foot and was in no condition to fight:²⁸

- 528 MU: also * bevor wir gekämpft habn * eine *
 well before the fight took place * one
- 529 MU: nei"n * ja" ei"ne woche davor wurd isch
 no yes one week before, I had an
-
- 530 MU: operiert| |hie"r | * >e=ding</bänder-
 operation here eh=things/torn
- 531 IN: wo-|am fuß|
 where- in your foot
-
- 532 MU: riss| * un=knochenbruch also bei"des
 ligament and fracture well both

With this background information, Murat fends off the threat of being a coward, and restores his positive self-image. Thereby, he uses near-standard German forms and formulates his speech in an elaborate, well-considered way. This segment is characterised as follows:

28. This is a shortened and simplified version of the original transcription; for the original see Keim and Knöbl (2007).

- he takes great pains (two self-repairs) to be precise about the time of his injury: *eine *nei“n *ja“ ei“ne Woche davor* (‘one, no, yes, one week before,’ 529)
- when emphasising his physical disability, he uses a complex syntactic structure: temporal clause, embedded and self-repaired temporal adverb, main clause: *also bevor wir gekämpft haben *eine *nei“n *ja“ ei“ne woche davor wurd isch operiert*↓ (‘before the fight took place, one, no, yes, one week before, I had an operation,’ 528/530)
- his pronunciation is very articulated (articulation of end syllables, no ligatures), has focal accents and an unmarked prosodic contour.

When explaining his injury, Murat has difficulty finding the medical term *torn ligament*, signalled by the proform *>e=din<* (‘eh=thing,’ 530), spoken in a soft voice. According to Kern and Selting’s (2006) analysis, *ding* or *dings* as a substitute or placeholder for names, nouns, adverbs, and verbs is characteristic of the ethnolectal German that the authors call “Türkendeutsch” (ibid.: 336). Typically, the element replacing the placeholder *ding* is produced in a prosodically independent postposition. In most instances of our data, the proform ‘ding’ is accentuated. It occurs predominantly in event descriptions with high involvement, and is followed by a short pause; the post-positioned supplement is produced as an independent prosodic segment.²⁹ In comparison to this structure, the use of ‘ding’ in line 530 does not have the function of a placeholder but rather the function of a hesitation signal, *>e=din<* being produced with a lower voice, faster, and without accent, and the postpositioned specification follows without a pause. Thus, *di“ng ** (with accent and following pause) in the function of a placeholder does not belong to the formulation pattern which Murat uses in background descriptions addressed to the ethnographer; in fact, it does not occur in background sequences in the entire conversation.

b. *Start of the fight narrative (533–536)*

The start of the fight narrative leads ‘in medias res’. Murat starts his next utterance with the temporal/modal adverb *auf einmal* and changes to a dramatising formulation pattern:

533 MU: *auf einmal, * un dann halt bin isch*
at the same time, and then, I just go out of

29. Murat uses *di“ng ** as a placeholder for a noun, e.g., in *isch bin in=s di“ng- * in=s büro von dem-* (‘I went to the thi“ng * to the office of the-’), and a placeholder for a quotation: *dann hat mein lehrer gesagt di“ng- * eigentlich will isch ja jedem helfen [...]*. (‘then my teacher said thing * usually I want to help everyone [...]').

- 534 MU: rau"s₁ * hab noch kru"ckn- * un dana"ch
 the house, am still walking on crutches and
- 535 MU: * hat=a gemeint di"ng₁ * <-hal=der wollt
 then he said things, he just was very
- 536 MU: u"nbedingt> n=kampf mit mir₁← un=isch
 anxious to fight with me, and I

The sequence *un dann halt bin isch rau"s₁ * hab noch kru"ckn-* ('and then, I just go out of the house, am still walking on crutches', 533/534) is characterised by the use of the historic present tense, short syntactic structures, and verb-first position in the second part. This formulation pattern is characteristic of a dramatised portrayal at the climax of a narrative. But when he starts to present the action of the adversary, there is a change of focus and perspective: *un dana"ch * hat=a gemeint di"ng₁* * ('and then, he said thing', 534/535). Instead of the rival's quote as it is projected by the quote introduction and the placeholder *di"ng₁* *, he sums up the adversary's motive: *<-hal=der wollt u"nbedingt> n=kampf mit mir₁←* ('he just was very anxious to fight with me', 535/536). With this, Murat switches to a formulation pattern characteristic of background information. That means that he repairs the early start of a dramatising description by filling in background information and explaining why he accepted the fight in spite of his serious injury.

c. *Explanation of motives (537–542)*

Then, Murat gives two reasons for accepting the challenge to fight in spite of his injury: first, he had to stand up for his honour; second, he took precautions and, for his safety, took a club along:³⁰

- 537 MU: un=isch konnt net sagn isch kann jetzt net
 and I could not say I am not fit to fight right now
- 538 MU: weil mein fuß gebrochn is odda so * bin
 because my foot is broken or something like that
- 539 MU: isch trotzdem hingegangn obwohl mein fuß noch
 I went there even though my foot still was
- 540 MU: zusammgenäht war * da hab=sch halt zur sischerheit
 sewn up and bandaged, but I took a club with me
- 541 MU: ein schlagstock mitgenomm₁ * -falls es
 for my safety, in case something really
- 542 MU: wirklich schiefgehn sollte odda so-
 should go wrong or things like that

30. This is a shortened version of the original transcription.

Murat presents his accepting the challenge as completely natural, downgrading it (537/539) by hedges and a matter-of-fact way of speaking. Thereby, he characterises himself as a young man of honour who has to accept the challenge of a rival, even though he is not sufficiently fit for a fight. Then, he admits that he did not march off to fight unprotected (540/542). These utterances are characterised by complex syntactic structures, hypotaxes with the conjunctions *weil*, *obwohl* and *falls*, as well as the conditional past tense in *schiefgehn sollte*. This sequence, where Murat explains his motives for accepting the fight challenge, comes close to German Standard and is elaborately formulated.

d. *Description of the fight (543–549)*

After this background information, Murat leads back to the description of the events by presenting the next action of his adversary. With this, he switches again into a dramatising formulation pattern:

543	MU:	der is halt auf misch drauf†	hab=sch
		<i>he throws himself on me</i>	<i>I pulled out</i>
544	MU:	schlagstock rausgezogn *	hab=sch ihm vom
		<i>the club</i>	<i>I grabbed him by</i>
<hr/>			
545	MU:	hals so gepackt=nach hintn	hab
		<i>the collar backwards</i>	<i>I</i>
546	IN:		oh * aha *
<hr/>			
547	MU:	isch den gepa"ckt† ** <un dann is sein/	
		<i>grabbed him</i>	<i>and then his/</i>
548	MU:	dann=s mein bruder und mein freund sin auf	
		<i>then my brother</i>	<i>and his friend jumped</i>
549	MU:	ihn drau"f>↓ (...) ham den bissl zusamnngetre"tn† *	
		<i>on him, kicked him around a bit and beat him up</i>	

As the adversary jumps on Murat, he draws the club out of his pocket and grabs the adversary by the collar. At this moment, Murat's brother and his friend, who by chance are passing by, grab the adversary and throw him down because they want to help the injured Murat.

Portraying the fight, Murat again uses the linguistic devices of a dense narrative description: progressing in small steps, sharpening of the main point, and using main clauses, short syntactical units with ligatures and deletion of sounds, and, above all, there are grammatical deviations, such as the deletion of the article

in the noun phrase *schlagstock* (544)³¹ and the wrong preposition in the prepositional phrase *vom hals so gepackt* (544/545, instead of *am hals*). In the research literature, such features are described as characteristics of ethnolectal German. It is interesting that Murat uses them here, in the dense narrative descriptions. The verb-first positionings (with inverted subject pronoun *hab=sch*, 543, 544, 545) in this segment as well as in Murat's other conversation material are not ethnolectal features. They can be found in narratives of the dialect-speaking Mannheim population as well.

At the climax of the narrative, unexpectedly, two new characters appear, Murat's brother and his brother's friend, who help him fight against the adversary. This formulation (*sin=die dann glei auf ihn drau* "f↑ ← 'they jumped on him', 548/549) as well as the result of their help (*ham den bissl zusammengetre* "tn↑ * 'kicked him about a bit and beat him up', 549) are in the dense narrative pattern, too: short syntactical constructions, verb-first positioning, ligatures, and series of intonation units with level pitch at the end of high-level intonation contours.³² These features contrast clearly with the formulation pattern that is characteristic of background descriptions with the more complex syntactic structures, no verb-first positioning and clearer articulation.

Summary

The narrative consists of two formulation patterns that occur in different structural parts:

- dense foreground presentations with detailed event portrayals progressing in small steps are achieved by short syntactical units (main clauses), verb-first positioning, sometimes the use of the historic present tense, ligatures, and, especially, ethnolectal grammatical features;
- background presentations, such as explaining of motives or giving reasons for actions, are realised by complex syntactical structures (causal, conditional, and concessive clauses), usually without grammatical deviations.

Murat displays a high narrative competence, presenting a well constructed and highly convincing narrative. Since ethnolectal grammatical features only occur in foreground presentations, the question of their functionality arises. This question

31. The same noun phrase was produced with an article in the previous background presentation *da hab=sch halt zur sisicherheit ein schlagstock mitgenommn* ('but I took a club with me for my safety', 540/541).

32. Furthermore, in this segment, an exceptional apical articulation of /r/ (in the word-initial consonant cluster <dr>, 549) occurs, which intensifies the ethnolectal impression.

can be answered if one compares the narrative that is addressed to the ethnographer as well as to his friends with other narratives where only the ethnographer is present. In one of these narratives, Murat describes a confrontation with his teacher that was crucial for his further school career. In this narrative, all the characteristics of dense descriptions are displayed (strings of short syntactical units, verb-first positioning, historic present tense, self- and other-quotations). But there are no ethnolectal grammatical features. Comparing these two types of narrative gives rise to the suggestion that the use of ethnolectal forms in the fight narrative depends on the specifics of the actual situation, namely Murat's addressing the ethnographer and his peers at the same time. Murat has to cope with two different interactional demands; he has to take into account the different background knowledge of the ethnographer, who knows nothing about the events, and his friends, who do know about them (that is made clear at the beginning of the narrative). And above all, he has to cope with two different social demands: establishing an intimate relationship with his friends and a more distant social relationship to the ethnographer. These tasks are performed by the use of different stylistic means. In the greeting ritual among friends (see above 4.2), the intimate relations of the peer group are indexed by German-Turkish mixing and ethnolectal forms. In the narrative, ethnolectal forms occur only in the presentation of the fight, especially in those parts which are also addressed to his friends. More complex and elaborate linguistic forms occur in the presentation of background information necessary for the ethnographer's understanding of Murat's motives.³³ That is, more complex and elaborate linguistic forms used vis-à-vis the outsider of the group signal a friendly but socially distanced relationship.

5. Murat at nineteen: New linguistic and communicative forms

Two years later, Murat displays some new linguistic and communicative forms, namely Mannheim dialect, as well as prosodically and phonetically unmarked Standard German, in a similar situation. It is again an interview situation, but it is much more formal and requires a high degree of linguistic reflection. A reporter from SWR3 (a regional TV station) wants to produce a TV report about the migrant youth group to which Murat belongs and asks the adolescents about their language use in front of the cameras.

The interview starts with the reporter asking whether "Kanaksprak" – the communicative behaviour of a migrant youth as it is constructed by the mass

33. Some of this background information is elicited by the interviewer, and she reacts to it; see the complete version of the transcript in Keim and Knöbl (2007).

social nearness to a native German as well as his dissociation from a “Kanaksprak” speaker. But at the same time, by the playful modalisation of dialectal forms, he signals that the Mannheim dialect is not the group’s “own language” (even though group members know it), but a kind of fun code.³⁷

When the reporter asks about the group’s way of speaking, Murat distinguishes between, on the one hand, a way of speaking to an outsider, e.g. the reporter, which he characterises as *ganz normal* (‘totally normal’) and, on the other hand, their in-group way of speaking:

- 109 MU: unter uns spreschn wir halt/ wi=spreschn
amongst ourselves we usually speak/ we say
- 110 MU: **n=aber moruk** was geht ab * sozusagen halt
hey man what’s up, what’s going on here, that’s it
- 111 MU: –de“s is die kanaknsprache– * wenn man
this is the language of the kanaka, if one
- 112 MU: schon zwei drei sätze zusammen bildet auf
constructs two or three sentences in Turkish
- 113 MU: türkisch plus zwei drei sätze auf deutsch–
plus two or three sentences in German
- 114 MU: * da“nn * könnt man sagen kanaknsprache! *
then one could call that the language of the kanaka
- 115 MU: aber krass alda is * kei“n türkisch! **
but ,krass alda’ is not Turkish

Murat presents the mixed utterance **n=aber moruk was geht ab** (‘hey man, what’s up, what’s going on here’, 110)³⁸ as an example of the “Kanakensprache” (‘language of the kanaka’, 111). Then, using a complex syntactic structure, he comments on his performance: he would accept the term “Kanakensprache” for a way of speaking where the Turkish and German elements are equally distributed. With this, he defines “Kanakensprache” as an insider-category, evaluates it positively, and contrasts it with the negatively evaluated outsider-category “Kanaksprak” initiated by the reporter.³⁹ In this sequence, Murat uses a complex Standard German

37. For the use of the Mannheim dialect as fun code, see Keim (2008: 434–448).

38. The Turkish *n=aber* is a cliticised form of *ne haber* (‘was gibt es Neues’). The German formula *was geht ab* reiterates the meaning of *n=aber*.

39. The contrast between the two language categories is especially discernible within the two different reference forms used by the reporter and Murat. While the reporter tries to achieve an ethnolocal pronunciation of the outsider category “Kanaksprak” by using an apical /r/ and short /a/-sounds, Murat pronounces the insider category in ‘unmarked German’ as in

formulation (see the lexical choice of *Sätze bilden* = ‘to construct sentences’ in the complex syntactic structure), and on the phonetic level, he produces no ‘foreign’ forms. Accentuation is supported by the pause structure, the rhythmic structure conforms to German Standard, and the accentuation supports the information: the accent on *de*’s (111) sharpens the contrast to the reporter’s term “Kanaksprak”, and the accent on *da*’nn (114) focuses the second part of his definition of “Kanakensprache” (114). Murat’s formulations are consistent with the rules of German, and he creates the impression of a complex and reflective way of speaking.

6. Summary

The analysis of these conversational sequences provides an insight into the wide range of Murat’s and his friends’ linguistic repertoire, which contains Turkish-German mixing, ethnolectal and Standard German, as well as forms of the regional dialect of Mannheim, and it reconstructs the social and discursive functions of the different ways of speaking. Murat’s reflective and complex self-presentation in the second interview is certainly elicited by the formality of the TV production as well as by Murat’s taking the role of the speaker of the group. Above all, it is influenced by the reporter’s introducing the “Kanaksprak”-speaker as he is constructed by the mass media. In contrast to the media figures’ simple-minded acting and formulaic and ethnolectal way of speaking, Murat displays a wide linguistic repertoire and switches with virtuosity between different linguistic forms in order to cope with various discursive and social tasks. Thereby, he symbolises his affiliation with his peer group as well as with the *normal* German speaker, and his disaffiliation from the “Kanak”-category of the media.

The high linguistic and communicative competence of Murat and his friends contrasts markedly with the low status and the poor prestige that these young migrants have in German educational institutions, as well as in German public discourse. We do not yet know if Murat and his friends are, in the ethnographic sense, representatives of those young migrants who are regarded as “school failures” and “losers”. That is, we do not yet know if the youths presented here are unusually proficient or if there are many young migrants like them whose high linguistic proficiencies contrast highly with their poor success at school. On the basis of Murat’s and his friends’ low school marks, especially in German, we can only state that their linguistic competences were not noticed by the educational institutions and that the schools did not succeed in developing their oral competences into

[kanakŋfɾɔːxə], reducing syllable final <-en> to a syllabic nasal and using a uvular fricative /r/ as well as a long /a/ in *sprache* (‘language’).

written skills. But above all, the educational institutions did not instil in them a positive attitude towards educational demands and professional careers. In spite of their competence, these youths have almost no opportunities in the job market. From the perspective of the German majority they are regarded as “social problem cases” and treated accordingly.

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Appendix

The transcription uses the signs of the German alphabet in analogy to the rules of pronunciation of German for the representation of the phonetic features of the spoken language, including dialectal speech. Transcription lines are organised like in a musical score. Scores are separated by a continuous line. In a score, successive contributions are represented from left to right. Turkish elements are marked by bold signs. In addition, we use the following notation:

*, **	short pause, longer pause
↑, ↓, –	rising, falling, and middle intonation
←, →	slower, faster tempo
<, >	louder, softer voice
"	strong accent
:	strong lengthening
=	slurring manner of articulation, linking different words
hab ich	overlapping passages
nein ich	
K	commentary to a speaker's utterance